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Studying small states in international security affairs: a quantitative analysis

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Abstract *Todays' international security architecture composed of international security treaties and international security norms has been established and formalized by negotiations. Owing to the great importance of international security negotiations for international security practices, this paper sheds light on negotiation activities. A study of 100 different international security negotiations shows that states vary considerably with respect to their negotiation activity. Some countries voice positions very often, while others remain completely silent. This is puzzling, as active negotiation participation is an expression of state sovereignty and a means to influence the shape of the international security architecture. The article distinguishes between capacity and incentives as driving forces of state activity in international security negotiations. The analysis reveals that, next to political and financial capacities, states that place high priority on military matters are more active, while smaller and poorer states are more likely to shelter under the security umbrella of larger counterparts.*

1. Introduction

International organizations and regimes (IOs) have multiplied since the end of World War II. Today, there are IOs in all issue areas, including international security. In fact, today's international security architecture incorporates a high number of rules and norms, such as nuclear non-proliferation (Müller et al 1994; Thayer 1995; Lodgaard and Maerli 2007), the responsibility to protect (Evans and Sahnoun 2002; Williams and Bellamy 2005; Cooper 2009), and the arms trade (Krause 2002; Bromley et al 2012; Erickson 2015), to name but a few, which either are based on interstate negotiations and are changed and reproduced in such negotiations or were initially created in international security negotiations (for example, Petersohn 2014).

As the security architecture of today is largely a negotiated one, this article takes a closer look at international security negotiations. More precisely, it examines how actively states participate in shaping international security norms and explains why some states are more vocal than others. Thus, the article addresses the following research question: Why are some states more vocal in international security negotiations than others?

This article provides answers to this question. In the subsequent section, it sheds light on varying activity of states in international security negotiations taking place under the United Nations (UN) umbrella (section 2). About half of the countries use their speaking rights in less than ten per cent of international security negotiations to which they have access. Since UN member states are formally

equal and since security is a high politics realm, one could expect that states will pay a lot of attention to the issue—yet the article illustrates that the vocalicity of states in these negotiations varies considerably. The fact that they are not equally active in international security negotiations is puzzling, since active participation is a means to flag national interests and shape the international security architecture and security-related norms. Moreover, being vocal during international security negotiations is an exercise in sovereignty.

In order to account for the observed variation in state activity in the realm of international security, section 3 draws on negotiation and international relations theory. On this basis it distinguishes between capacity and incentive-based accounts and formulates a set of hypotheses. The theoretical expectations are empirically examined in section 4 on the basis of a quantitative analysis. This reveals that size matters but is not the only factor with relevance for the negotiation behaviour of states. While smaller states are less inclined to make their voices heard in international security negotiations than their more populous counterparts, effective political procedures, large diplomatic missions, and opportunities for free-riding on the negotiation efforts of other states are also important.

This article argues that, next to political and financial capacities, states that place high priority on military matters are more active, while smaller poorer states tend to shelter under the security umbrella of larger counterparts. On this basis, the article concludes with reflections on how states (especially smaller ones) can work towards optimizing their voice in international security negotiations.

2. The pattern: states in international security negotiations

The UN was created in 1945. Back then, 51 larger and smaller countries, among them France, the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, the United States (US), Mexico, China, as well as Belgium, Luxembourg, Peru, the Philippines, and Venezuela, pushed for international cooperation within an encompassing IO. After the experience of World War II, the UN was to serve as a means to maintain international peace and to develop and sustain friendly relations among sovereign states, as well as to foster social and humanitarian progress and to promote human rights (Cede 2001; Schlesinger 2011). The UN's organizational structure is outlined in the UN Charter. In two of the UN's six principal organs international security and disarmament issues are negotiated. These are the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA-C1) and the Security Council (SC).¹ In addition to these UN principal organs, several international organizations have been created and subsumed under the UN umbrella, some of which also deal with questions of international security and disarmament. These include the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) regime and the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The international security architecture has incrementally evolved through numerous international negotiations in a broad variety of institutional contexts (Buzan and Hansen 2007; 2009; Buzan and Waever 2008; Daase 2008; Rathbun 2011). Today, there are many rules and norms with respect to international security,

¹ The other principle organs are the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Secretariat, the Trusteeship Council and the International Court of Justice.

concerning issues ranging from nuclear proliferation, arms trade disarmament, and interventions, to conflict resolution and peace-building (Hines and Lowry 1986; Adler 1992; Kilgour and Brams 1992; Raghavan 1996; Panke and Petersohn 2011). Since multilateral negotiations between states provide crucial building blocks for the international security architecture, it is important to zoom into international security negotiations. This article sheds light on negotiation dynamics and studies differences in the active participation of states. How vocal are states in international security negotiations and how can we explain differences in state vocalicity? In addressing this research question, the article enquires into the reasons why some states are rather silent despite the fact that it is puzzling that they should be, since voicing a national position is important to making an impact.

The remainder of this section maps the negotiation activity of all UN members in the UNGA-C1, the SC, the ATT, the OPWC, the IAEA and the CD. These IOs were selected because they provide public access to the necessary records (protocols, verbatim records, press releases or minutes that contain information on who took the floor during negotiations). For each IO, the data-set entails four negotiations in each of the five years² between 2008 and 2012, which resembles a representative post-Cold-War period. In order to create a representative database of international security negotiations, the negotiations cover the core policy area of the respective IO (for example, no administrative issues). The negotiations were hand coded and the coding captures how often each state spoke up in a negotiation. The resulting data-set includes 100 individual negotiations taking place within the six international security organizations (ISOs). Together these negotiations entail more than 13,000 data points on the activity of 205 countries and autonomous territories.

In the negotiations under scrutiny, states made 4827 formal speeches. On average a country spoke up 36.29 per cent of the time. Table 1 illustrates that the 'absolute participation' of national diplomats, meaning the number of time they speak in international security negotiations, varies considerably. The most active states are the US with 204 speeches, followed by Iran with 188, Russia with 166, France with 157, the UK with 137, Pakistan with 135, Brazil with 130 and Canada with 129 speeches. By contrast, states such as the Republic of Congo, Greece, Mali and Mozambique made only five speeches each and states such as the Central African Republic, Tajikistan, Tuvalu, Benin and Kiribati remained totally silent.

However, not every state is member of every IO or regime or has access to the maximum of 100 negotiations in the period under investigations. Thus, Table 1 also controls for speaking opportunities and shows the percentage of occasions in which states made use of their speaking rights in the negotiations to which they had access ('relative participation'). This reveals that some states are very vocal and speak up more than once on average whenever they have the opportunity (countries activity scores of more than 100 are the US, Iran, Russia, France, the UK, Pakistan, Brazil, Canada, Algeria, China, Japan, Australia, India, Cuba, Egypt and Germany), whereas others use their speaking opportunities less often: for example Bahrain, Ghana, Gabon, Namibia, Panama and Yemen speak up in about one out of ten occasions they have access to international security negotiations.

² Or up to four per year for those IOs and regimes in which meetings did not take place as frequently.

Although all UN member states are formally equal, they do not actively participate to an equal extent in international security negotiations, as Table 1 illustrates. On the one hand, one could adopt a neo-realist point of view and argue that small states are weak and should therefore be less active in international security affairs in general (see the debate on Waltz [1979] in Wivel et al [2014] and Browning [2006]). However, when states are members of ISOs they all have one voice, irrespective of their power. Thus, even small states can use their formal rights. Also, given that active participation is not only a means to flag national interests and shape international security architecture and security-related norms but also a means to exercise state sovereignty, it is puzzling that about half of the states use their speaking rights in less than ten per cent of the international security negotiations to which they have access.

It is also puzzling that states such as the Central African Republic are considerably less vocal than others such as Rwanda, even though in this example both states are rather poor African states that do not differ greatly in population size. This article examines whether this pattern indicates that smaller states are minor players when it comes to high politics and are therefore considerably more often silent in international organizations and regimes dealing with international security and disarmament. It also examines whether smaller states have the potential to punch above their weight, and if so, which variables account for above-average negotiation activity among smaller states. While there is not one universally accepted definition of what constitutes a 'small state' (Panke 2010a; Goetschel 1998; Hey 2003; Ingebritsen et al 2006; Thorhallsson and Wivel 2006), nobody would deny that today's sovereign states are formally equal in most international negotiation contexts but differ considerably with respect to their population (Panke 2011a), geography (Goetschel 1998) or military (Rickli 2008; Rothstein 1963; Vital 1971; Waltz 1979), for example. This article measures the size of states by the number of their inhabitants (population), rather than their geography or military, because this variable can have implications for a state's capacities and incentives, both of which may be relevant to the dynamics of international security negotiations (see section 3).

A large body of small state literature examines how far size matters and how and under what conditions smaller states can punch above their weight (Panke 2012a; 2012b). We already know a lot about how smaller states act in the realm of international political economy (trade, finance, labour).³ Also, we know a lot about how they act in specific negotiation contexts, such as the European Union or the UNGA.⁴ When it comes to the role of smaller states in international negotiations, especially in the field of international security, there are several case studies on smaller states in alliances and also about the role of smaller states in international crises and in conflict management.⁵ What we know very little about is how strongly size-related capacity and incentive variables affect the behaviour of states in international security negotiations. Thus, this article seeks to enquire generally

³ For example: Katzenstein 1985; 2003; Hey 2003; Maes and Verdun 2005; Ingebritsen et al 2006; Lee and Smith 2008; Steinmetz and Wivel 2010.

⁴ For example: Baillie 1998; Goetschel 1998; Hanf and Soetendorp 1998; Arter 2000; Bunse et al 2005; Maes and Verdun 2005; Sepos 2005; Thorhallsson and Wivel 2006; Tiilikainen 2006; Bjoerkdahl 2008; Panke 2008; 2010a; 2010b; 2011b, 2013c; Schure and Verdun 2008; Steinmetz and Wivel 2010.

⁵ For example: Rothstein 1963; Vital 1971; Sutton and Payne 1993; Goetschel 1998; Hey 2003; Srebrnik 2003; Ingebritsen et al 2006; Rickli 2008.

Table 1. Absolute and relative negotiation frequency

State	Absolute activity	Relative activity	State	Absolute activity	Relative activity	State	Absolute activity	Relative activity	State	Absolute activity	Relative activity
US	204	204.00	PL	28	34.15	AL	6	9.23	GM	1	2.27
IR	188	226.51	TH	28	41.79	BW	6	9.23	GY	1	2.27
RU	166	166.00	KZ	26	31.71	CD	6	7.32	HN	1	1.56
FR	157	157.00	UY	26	36.62	CI	6	9.38	LC	1	2.27
GB	137	137.00	PT	25	32.05	CY	6	9.23	MD	1	1.54
PK	135	151.69	BE	22	25.58	GE	6	8.82	MU	1	1.54
BR	130	144.44	BF	22	30.56	JM	6	9.38	PY	1	1.56
CA	129	150.00	CZ	22	33.33	Li	6	9.23	SO	1	2.22
DZ	127	154.88	FI	22	26.51	NP	6	9.09	SS	1	4.00
CN	124	124.00	KE	21	25.30	SV	6	9.38	TD	1	1.56
JP	122	134.07	HR	20	25.64	AM	5	7.69	AD	0	0.00
AU	121	142.35	SP	19	27.14	CG	5	7.81	AN	0	0.00
IN	113	124.18	TN	18	21.95	GR	5	7.69	BN	0	0.00
CU	112	136.59	GT	16	23.53	ML	5	7.81	BT	0	0.00
EG	108	166.15	HU	16	19.51	MZ	5	7.81	CF	0	0.00
DE	95	105.56	RO	16	19.51	BZ	4	6.25	CK	0	0.00
MX	87	96.67	TT	16	24.62	DO	4	6.25	CV	0	0.00
ID	85	96.59	TZ	16	24.62	EE	4	6.06	CW	0	0.00
ZA	83	89.25	SG	15	23.44	FJ	4	6.25	DM	0	0.00
KR	73	87.95	SI	15	21.43	GD	4	9.09	FM	0	0.00
PH	73	97.33	SN	15	18.29	HT	4	6.15	FO	0	0.00
CH	65	78.31	VN	15	16.67	HolySee	4	57.14	GL	0	0.00

(Continued)

Table 1. Continued

State	Absolute activity	Relative activity	State	Absolute activity	Relative activity	State	Absolute activity	Relative activity	State	Absolute activity	Relative activity
AR	64	75.29	AZ	14	20.29	LS	4	6.15	GN	0	0.00
MY	62	74.70	BG	14	17.07	MW	4	6.25	GQ	0	0.00
SY	62	72.09	CM	14	17.07	NI	4	6.15	GW	0	0.00
TR	60	65.93	MM	14	22.22	PN	4	14.29	KI	0	0.00
CO	55	61.11	QA	14	21.88	AO	3	6.67	KM	0	0.00
NO	55	66.27	SA	14	21.88	BB	3	6.82	KN	0	0.00
CL	54	64.29	SD	13	20.00	BI	3	4.69	MC	0	0.00
NG	54	60.67	TG	13	19.12	BJ	3	4.69	MG	0	0.00
NL	49	59.76	UG	13	18.31	IS	3	4.62	MH	0	0.00
SE	49	59.76	AE	12	18.75	KG	3	4.62	MR	0	0.00
NZ	48	58.54	BA	12	16.90	KH	3	4.62	MV	0	0.00
VE	48	57.14	DK	12	18.46	LU	3	4.55	NR	0	0.00
DP	47	109.30	ZM	12	14.63	LV	3	4.69	NU	0	0.00
MA	47	54.02	ET	11	13.25	NE	3	4.69	PW	0	0.00
AT	46	51.69	SK	11	13.41	PG	3	4.69	SB	0	0.00
IL	45	63.38	JO	10	14.71	RW	3	4.69	SC	0	0.00
IT	45	51.72	MN	10	12.20	SL	3	4.62	ST	0	0.00
IE	39	47.56	LT	9	14.06	SR	3	6.82	SZ	0	0.00
IQ	36	44.44	MT	9	14.06	ER	2	3.13	TJ	0	0.00
LB	36	49.32	KW	8	12.50	HK	2	2.44	TL	0	0.00
BY	35	42.68	ZW	8	11.76	LA	2	3.13	TM	0	0.00
CR	34	44.16	BH	7	10.94	LR	2	3.13	TO	0	0.00

ES	33	39.76	BO	7	10.77	ME	2	3.13	TV	0	0.00
LY	33	43.42	GA	7	10.00	MK	2	3.13	TW	0	0.00
PE	32	38.10	GH	7	10.77	OM	2	3.13	UZ	0	0.00
BD	31	37.35	NAM	7	10.94	SM	2	4.55	VC	0	0.00
EC	30	35.71	PA	7	10.29	AG	1	2.27	VG	0	0.00
UA	29	35.37	YE	7	10.94	BS	1	2.44	VU	0	0.00
LK	28	33.73	AF	6	9.09	DJ	1	2.22	WS	0	0.00

The countries are abbreviated according to the A2 ISO code, which is available <http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/ctycodes.htm>

into the driving forces of state activity in international security negotiations and to contribute specifically to the small states strand of research (for example: Goetschel 1998; Hey 2003; Ingebritsen et al 2006a; 2006b; Thorhallsson and Wivel 2006; Lee and Smith 2008; Steinmetz and Wivel 2010) by shedding light on whether size-related variables influence the active participation of states in international security negotiations.

3. Theory: accounting for activity differences among states in international security negotiations

This section draws on managerial approaches focusing on capacities (Chayes and Handler-Chayes 1995; Bräutigam 1996) as well as motivational approaches focusing on incentives (Schelling 1978; Segal 2000; Blavoukos and Bourantonis 2015) in order to theorize variation in the active participation of states in international security negotiations. In general, the stronger a state's incentives and the more capacity it has available to it, the more vocal it should be in international affairs. Vice versa, the more limited a country's incentives and the more it grapples with capacity shortages, the less often its diplomats are likely to take the floor and present national positions in international security negotiations. Thus, states should be most active when they possess a level of resources to act upon the incentives and when they have strong incentives in security negotiations and least active when both capacities and incentives are limited (see Figure 1).

A country's position on an international security issue on an international negotiation agenda is not self-evident or naturally pre-existing (King 1973; Neack et al 1995). States have to develop or construct a national position domestically in the first place (Putnam 1988; Mo 1995; Weldes 1996; Moravcsik 1997; 1998; Odell 2010). Smaller states often have fewer budgetary resources with which to formulate national positions (Goetschel 1998; Hey 2003; Ingebritsen et al 2006; Thorhallsson and Wivel 2006), which reduces the number of international security issues for which a state has a position and on the basis of which national diplomats are active in international negotiations. In line with this, the first hypothesis expects that states will be more vocal in international security negotiations the more financial capacities they possess (H1a).

Next to financial resources (Krasner 1978; Lake 1999), political capacity is also important for a state's conduct in international affairs (Goldstein and Keohane 1993; Chayes and Handler-Chayes 1995; Odell 2000; Beasley et al 2001; 2012;

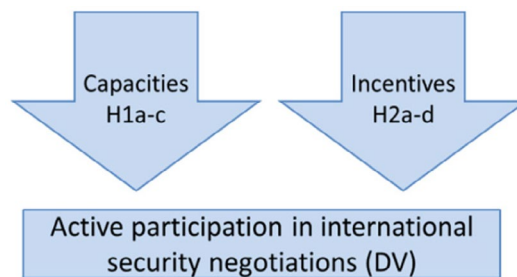


Figure 1. Theorizing active participation in international negotiations

Kaarbo 2012). States are in a better position to efficiently formulate national positions for a broad range of international topics the more effectively their government and ministry of foreign affairs (MFA) operate. When the diplomat at an international negotiation table does not know his or her country's position, either because the government has not sent any instructions or because the instructions have been delayed, it is less likely that he or she will take the floor and actively participate in the negotiations. In contrast, when government capacities are high and the domestic procedures in place for the formulation of national positions are effective, MFAs are more likely to swiftly develop instructions, which in turn enable the national diplomats to voice the country's position in international security negotiations. Thus, the second capacity hypothesis expects that an increase in government effectiveness will increase a country's activity in international security negotiations (H1b).

Having national positions is important, but a country also needs to have enough diplomats at the locations of international negotiations in order to attend all negotiations that may possibly take place simultaneously (Zartman and Berman 1982; Kremenjuk 1991; Berton et al 1999; Plantey 2007). If the number of diplomats posted is low, it is less likely that negotiations can be fully covered and hence less likely that the state's position will be voiced. Thus, increasing the number of national diplomats should increase a country's active participation in international security negotiations (H1c).

The first three expectations focus on a potentially important aspect of state behaviour: capacities. The subsequent hypotheses focus on the incentive structure of states in order to theorize whether they will be inclined to actively participate in international security negotiations.

International relations approaches point out that preference intensity can have an impact on a state's conduct in international affairs (for example: Druckman 1977; Keohane 1984; 1989; Kremenjuk 1991; Levy 1997; Berton et al 1999; Odell 2000; Segal 2000; Ringquist et al 2003; Plantey 2007; Armstrong et al 2010; Mangold 2013; Blavoukos and Bourantonis 2015). Preference intensity could matter as well for the frequency with which states actively participate in international security negotiations. When states have particularly strong preferences they are motivated to redirect their resources to the issues on which they place high priority (Hey 2003; Ingebritsen et al 2006; Galbreath 2006). First, countries that are well equipped in military terms not only have the means to act in the realm of international security when a crisis arises, but also systematically invest in being able to do so (Keohane 1986a; Baldwin 1993; Vasquez 1998; Hirst 2014). Accordingly, the extent of military spending in relation to a state's economic prosperity is a proxy for the priority that states attach to international security issues. Thus, hypothesis 2a expects that states will be more vocal in international security negotiations the greater the share of their income they devote to military expenses (H2a).

Becoming active in international negotiations can be costly (Schelling 1980; Putnam 1988; Moravcsik 1997), not least since states need to develop and update instructions for their diplomats at the negotiation venue and they also need to invest in manpower and administrative resources to actively follow up the negotiations (Panke 2014). Thus, a country's incentive to take the floor during an international negotiation may also be influenced by the alternative courses of action that are available to it (Keohane 1984). Many of the regional groups or alliances have regular group coordination meetings in which group members discuss issues on

the international negotiation agenda in order to develop a common position as a means of leveraging their aims in the international arena (Oberthür 1999; Smith 2006; Groenleer and Schaik 2007; Delreux 2013; Smith 2013). On this basis, one state may speak for the group during an international negotiation. In such instances an individual state may have a best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA) and may free-ride on the negotiation efforts of other group members instead of taking the floor itself (Kindleberger 1981). Accordingly, the more groups a state belongs to, the lower its participation level in international negotiations (H2b).

Size is a prominent explanatory variable in research on international cooperation and conflict (Vital 1971; Zartman and Rubin 2009; Levy 1982). Regional hegemons can provide security umbrellas on whom smaller states can rely for the guarantee of their own security (Keohane 1980; Beeson 2006; Mangold 2013). Consequently, larger states should have stronger incentives than smaller states to actively shape the international security architecture, while smaller states tend to shelter in the shadow of larger ones (Ingebritsen et al 2006; Thorhallsson 2011; Tilly et al 1985). Accordingly, hypothesis 2c expects that the smaller a country is, the more likely it will be under the security umbrella of a larger state and the more limited its incentives to take care of its own security by actively participating in international security negotiations (H2c).

Finally, socialization can also influence state incentives (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990; Checkel 1999; Alderson 2001). States that have been in the UN for a longer period of time have had more time to experience that their survival is not threatened by international security negotiations and their implications. Moreover, countries that have been in the UN for a while have already had numerous opportunities to influence international security norms and rules in past negotiations. Thus, these states may be less motivated to actively participate in the negotiation of the international security architecture. By contrast, states that have not been in the UN for a long period of time may be more alert when it comes to international security issues, as they may feel more uncertain whether these negotiations will have implications for their future survival. Thus, states that are newer to the UN should have greater incentive to become active in international security negotiations (H2d).

In a nutshell, if all hypotheses were supported by empirical evidence, population size should matter for the active participation of states in international security negotiations, but will not be the only important variable. Most notably, states with great economic power are more active than states with an equal number of inhabitants but a smaller economy. Such states are expected to be more often silent in international negotiations on security topics, especially if they happen to have ineffective government apparatus or slim diplomatic missions, have already been in the UN for some time, can free-ride on other states through group membership, or have small military investments. Vice versa, smaller states should be more active than population and economic size alone would predict if they have either especially strong preferences at stake (for example, being young and insecure, having particularly high military investments) or possess a lot of negotiation capacity (effective domestic government, large diplomatic mission). The subsequent section will empirically examine the hypotheses and shed light on their plausibility.

4. Empirical analysis

The dependent variable for the quantitative analysis focuses on individual negotiation contributions and is count data (0 for no statement made by an actor that is participating in a specific negotiation, 1 for one speech act made in a specific negotiation, 2 for two speech acts, etc.). The mean number of speeches is 0.37 and the maximum number of speeches made by a single state in a single negotiation is 18. In total, for the 100 security negotiations, there are 13,153 observations (number of negotiations multiplied by the number of instances of states' access to negotiations). The distribution of the dependent variable shows an over-dispersion, since mean and variance differ (0.3696495 and 1.063014, respectively), because of which the analysis below will be based on negative binominal regressions.⁶ The models are kept parsimonious in order to avoid problems resulting from multicollinearity between explanatory variables.

The independent variables are operationalized in the following manner (the descriptive statistics are available in Table A1, Annex). Financial resources are the independent variable (IV) of hypothesis 1a, measured by a country's gross domestic product (GDP) in US\$ billion. Data on the average GDP of states stem from the World Bank and cover the period 2008–2012. Government effectiveness (IV of H1b) is an indicator from the World Bank governance series which captures the bureaucratic effectiveness of states in the development and delivery of public goods and is therefore a good proxy for the ability of states to swiftly develop negotiation instructions for the whole range of international security topics under negotiation. The data stem from the World Bank, range between +2.5 (highest) and –2.5 and cover the years 2008–2012. The size of diplomatic missions (IV H1c) is measured by the number of national diplomats posted to New York. Data on the diplomatic staff number in country missions stem from the UN Blue Book. Preference intensity for security issues (IV H2a) is measured as military expenditure as a percentage of GDP. The data on military expenditure as a percentage of GDP are from the CIA Factbook and covers only one year for each state (average between 2005 and 2009).⁷ The group membership variable counts the number of institutionalized groups a state had joined by 2012. The data stem from the respective homepages. The size of countries is captured by the number of inhabitants. The data stem from 2009 and have been obtained from the CIA Factbook. Finally, membership duration in the selected UN umbrella organizations and regimes dealing with international security and disarmament questions is measured in years and the data stem from the UN homepage.⁸

The quantitative analysis provides empirical evidence for all three capacity-related expectations. In line with hypothesis 1a, models 1 and 2 illustrate that the stronger states are in economic terms, the more vocal they are in international security negotiations. States with slimmer budgets are more likely to experience resource constraints. They tend to have a less well-staffed MFA, which can hamper the ability of these states to swiftly formulate and update national positions for all security-related

⁶ The findings remain robust if the models are run with Poisson instead of nbreg regressions (see Appendix).

⁷ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>

⁸ <http://www.un.org/>

issues on the international negotiation agenda.⁹ Thus, limited financial resources reduce in effect the ability of national diplomats to voice the position of their country.

As expected by hypothesis 1b, states with well-functioning government apparatus are significantly more vocal in international security negotiations than countries grappling with procedural inefficiencies (models 1–4, Table 2). Ineffective political systems perform less well when it comes to constructing national positions on international issues and forwarding them to the respective national diplomats at the international negotiation table (Panke 2013a). In line with the quantitative insight, a diplomat from a rather inactive country reported, ‘at the UN, things move at a different pace than at any MFA ... so, instructions are often time delayed’ (interview#96, 12–04–11, cited in Panke 2013c).

Finally, the size of diplomatic missions is important as well. Model 3 supports hypothesis 1c, since the sign for national diplomats is positive and strongly significant. Diplomacy requires diplomats (Sharp 2009). Consequently, the more manpower states have at an international negotiation headquarters, the better they are able to cover all negotiations and the greater the chances are that they will actively negotiate international security issues. By contrast, states with very few diplomats posted at the international negotiation location can run into shortages of manpower, which hamper the frequency with which the respective state is vocal in international negotiations. In line with this, a diplomat reported, ‘manpower—it does become a big problem, when you want to become very active, but you don’t have the capacity’ (interview#6, 21–10–10).¹⁰

In interviews, many diplomats emphasized that governments usually set priorities on which issues they focus on the most in international negotiations, especially since the number of negotiations taking place in various policy areas and venues is high.¹¹ The quantitative analysis also indicates that incentives influence

⁹ International negotiation processes are capacity intensive and require experts and administrators. For example, a diplomat explained. ‘So you get a general instruction in the beginning but you get a final instruction for the vote. So you cannot get a very firm instruction at the beginning of negotiations because the nature of negotiations is to negotiate, to change the positions, to try to trade. This is important, we are not going to give up but if this is important for you and not for me then ok we can try to empathize but nobody at home can foresee, so we have our instructions on time, we’re proud of that but you cannot have very firm instructions before you see the final text and that’s our responsibility here, to be during the meeting, during the informals, during bilateral negotiations or to have personal context and to come up and say, listen tomorrow we’ll be facing a new proposal, completely new draft, so let’s abandon this one, you’ll see in the morning they’ll have new text. That’s why you must have experts who have colleagues who they can call or they call them and that’s how it works. Otherwise you’re an outsider, you just come and vote; that’s not diplomacy.’ (interview#134, 30–11–11).

¹⁰ Another interviewee reported, ‘I think the bigger countries will always have an advantage in a better overview of what is going on in a very complex negotiation setting at the UN. They will have the advantage of presence in all the different meetings that take place, whereas a small country will have to prioritize where to send their diplomats because they cannot be in all of the rooms at the same time’ (interview#103, 14–07–11). Similarly: ‘manpower is also very important because bigger states who are rich, they have large embassies, they have large representations in New York, and therefore they’re able to cover more ground’ (interview#154, 26–01–12). The same interviewee also reported. ‘if you’re on the Security Council you can’t afford to miss one committee meeting, you have to know what’s going on because people are demanding your influence and your lobbying and support for certain issues. So you have to be, you have to be there. That’s why certain countries were turned down to be on the Security Council. They just don’t have the manpower’ (interview#154, 26–01–12).

¹¹ For example, diplomats made statements such as ‘the first priority is prioritization’ (interview#10, 15–11–10) or ‘small states can’t be everywhere, it is impossible ... one has to ... try to get priorities in line’ (interview#24, 02–12–10) or ‘Even for United States everything is not of interest, particularly for small countries and for very small countries no way. You must prioritize what really is your interest’ (interview#134, 30–11–11) or ‘We are a peacekeeper country, so we will be following peacekeeping-related meetings but then there will be a whole other range of things, that are priorities of other countries so we let those countries shepherd the processes or be active in those processes’ (interview#160, 15–03–12).

Table 2. Regression analysis

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(H1a) Capacity: GDP	2.52E-14*** (2.24E-15)	2.72E-14*** (2.24E-15)		
(H1b) Capacity: government effectiveness	0.271*** (0.0208)	0.231*** (0.0226)	0.186*** (0.0220)	0.327*** (0.0229)
(H1c) Capacity: national diplomats			0.0298*** (0.002)	
(H2a) Incentive: military expenditure (% GDP)	0.0426*** (0.010)			
(H2b) Incentive: group memberships	-0.00141 (0.0144)	-0.0177 (0.0145)	-0.0926*** (0.0132)	-0.00204 (0.0138)
(H2c) Incentive: size				1.66E-09*** (1.29E-10)
(H2d) Incentive: membership duration	0.0341*** (0.00201)	0.0350*** (0.00193)	0.0291*** (0.00188)	0.0326*** (0.00187)
Constant	0.515*** (0.0653)	0.556*** (0.0649)	0.429*** (0.0628)	0.568*** (0.0645)
Observations	11,970	13,020	13,020	13,020
Akaike information criterion (AIC)	18,117.4	18,927.0	18,397.3	18,865.4

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; robust standard errors in parentheses.

the negotiation behaviour of states, but not all hypotheses find equally strong support.

Hypothesis 2a expects that states will be more vocal in international security negotiations the more they themselves invest in military capacity. In line with this, model 1 reveals that increases in military expenditure have a significant and positive impact on a state's inclination to participate actively in the international negotiation arena. Similarly, studies on how governments estimate one another's military spending (Lebovic 1995) and on how weapon technology and related investments matter (Deudney 1995) also point out that military budgets are indicative of the security-related aspirations of states as well as the emphasis they place on security issues.¹²

¹² Diplomats indicate that preference-setting matters especially when states encounter resource-related bottlenecks: 'there are so many meetings going on, that most delegations have to triage to a certain extent and say ok, I am going to be able to make it to this meeting, but I will not be able to make it to this one and I have to decide which one is more important' (interview#3, 08-09-10). Moreover, a diplomat from a country with very limited military spending stated, 'Prioritization helps as well. If you are a small country, we have seven diplomats here, we can't cover everything but we have neighbours here who have only one member. Marshall Islands for example, they have one person. He can't cover everything so he must set priority. For my country it's climate change ... I don't care about Sudan or responsibility to protect, I don't care about anything else' (interview#134, 30-11-11).

The empirical evidence for hypothesis 2b is not as strong as for the preceding hypotheses: while the sign is robustly negative, only in model 3 is the effect significant. Thus, there is a tendency that states be less vocal during international security negotiations the greater the number of groups they are members in. This observation is in line with secondary literature that stresses that regional organizations often started as a means of cooperation in the economic realm, but today also engage in external and security-relevant matters (Fawcett and Hurrell 1995; Laatikainen 2003; Blavoukos and Bourantonis 2011; Schröder 2011; Kingah and Van Langenhove 2012; Zwartjes et al 2012; Panke 2013b; Weiffen et al 2013). Thus, members of some regional groups, such as the EU or ECOWAS, do in some instances coordinate positions prior to international negotiations, including in the security realm, and their member states speak on behalf of their groups in the international arena (Panke et al 2017; Drieskens et al 2007; Makinda and Okumu 2007; Blavoukos and Bourantonis 2011). Hence, being in an larger number of groups puts states in a position to free-ride (Oma 2012; Adler and Barnett 1998; Müller 2002; Rothstein 1963). Thus, especially smaller and poorer states can remain inactive whilst benefiting from the international negotiations efforts of larger group members when the latter voice group positions.

Model 4 in Table 2 illustrates that in international security negotiations states tend to be less vocal, the smaller they are. According to hypothesis 2c, this finding may reflect that larger states cannot passively rest under a security umbrella, but are rather the ones that actively provide security to others. Thus, these states have particularly strong incentives to actively participate in international security negotiations and influence the shape of the international security architecture.¹³ Prominent examples include the US and its security-related activities within the NATO hemisphere and concerning NATO members (Kaplan 1984; Oma 2012) or Russia and its security-related activities vis-à-vis members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) (Mankoff 2009; Cooley 2012).

Unlike expected by hypothesis 2d, states that have been in the UN for a longer time are more active in international security negotiations. Thus, it is not the case that especially younger states are insecure about their future and are therefore inclined to become active in international security negotiations. Instead, it may be the case that learning plays a role (Levy 1994; Cohen and Sproull 1996; Farkas 1998; Checkel 1999; Alderson 2001). The longer that states have been in the various UN umbrella security negotiation arenas, the better they have learnt that they can only make a mark and influence the international security architecture (or elements thereof) if they themselves are active.

5. Conclusions

Today's international security architecture has been shaped by negotiations. In numerous institutional arenas, states have formulated rules and norms to ensure security and peace and to prevent violent conflict and war (Johnstone 2003; Malone 2008; Bromley et al 2012; Erickson 2015). Since international security negotiations are

¹³ In line with this a diplomat from a smaller country emphasized that groups such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are important in international negotiations under the UN umbrella: 'in this world in the twenty-first century still there's no way of dealing with foreign policies without working as closely as you can with all of your allies and partners' (interview#12, 23–11-10).

of great importance, this article has opened the black box in order to shed light on the negotiation activities of states. Studying 100 different negotiations in the UNGA-C1, the SC, the ATT, the OPWC, the IAEA and the CD, this article has illustrated that states vary in their propensity to be vocal. Some states voice their positions very often and even multiple times during the same negotiation, while others are completely silent. This is puzzling, as states that do not participate actively cannot exert influence over negotiation outcomes and cannot shape the international security architecture in the same way as states that articulate and push their national positions.

To shed light on the phenomenon of varying degrees of silence in international security negotiations, the article draws on international relations and negotiation research and distinguishes between capacity and incentives as driving forces of state activity in international security negotiations. The corresponding hypotheses were examined on the basis of a combination of quantitative regression analysis and narrative interview evidence. This showed that, apart from political and financial capacities, states with strong incentives concerning military matters are more active in negotiations taking place in international security organizations.

According to realism and neo-realism, big powers are more important to international dynamics than smaller states (Morgenthau 1948; Keohane 1986a; 1986b; Vasquez 1998). This article has examined whether this implies that smaller states are inherently less active in international security negotiations than larger ones. It has illustrated that smaller states are indeed often less vocal when it comes to negotiating international security. Compared with their larger counterparts, smaller states are more likely to face difficulties in developing national positions and in acting on them in international security negotiations, since they have slimmer budgets with which to prepare national positions back home in their MFA, and often also have fewer diplomats at the international negotiation table. However, this does not necessarily tie the hands of smaller states. They can play an active role in international security negotiations if they (re)set their preferences accordingly, for example by shifting resources from other policy areas to security issues,¹⁴ or by using group membership strategically as a means to exert leverage and make one's voice more important in international negotiations though speaking on behalf of a group rather than voicing an individual position.¹⁵ Moreover, smaller states can turn into more active international players when they install effective governments that are able to quickly develop national positions.¹⁶

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¹⁴ For example, a diplomat from a smaller, very vocal state explained, 'security is the number one, human rights, millennium goals, climate change, these are some of the priorities that guides the [country name omitted by the author] policies towards the UN' (interview#12, 23–11-10).

¹⁵ For example, Uruguay was more active than its population or economic size would have led one to expect, not least because the positions voiced by Uruguay included speaking on behalf of Mercosur (Southern Common Market) in the UNGA in 2009.

¹⁶ For example, Singapore and Luxembourg both have effective governments and the national diplomats therefore obtain instructions in time for the start of international security negotiations, which contributes to the relatively high negotiation activity of both these population-wise rather small states.

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Table A1. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
GDP	21,616	1.66E+12	6.54E+12	0.001	7.59E+13
Government effectiveness	21,392	-0.0645485	1.021393	-2.270577	2.25912
National diplomats	21,504	12.44271	14.23669	0	126
Military expenditure (% GDP)	19,152	2.35	1.962033	1.00E-06	11.4
Number of group memberships	21,616	4.38342	1.912137	0	11
Population	21,504	3.59E+07	1.32E+08	12373	1.34E+09
Membership duration	21,504	45.21354	17.79295	4	65

Table A2. Robustness check: Poisson regressions

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(H1a) Capacity: GDP	1.75E-14*** (1.47E-15)	1.90E-14*** (1.43E-15)		
(H1b) Capacity: government effectiveness	0.236*** (0.0215)	0.214*** (0.0221)	0.177*** (0.0231)	0.293*** (0.0229)
(H1c) Capacity: national diplomats			0.0182*** (0.001)	
(H2a) Incentive: military expenditure (% GDP)	0.0357*** (0.009)			
(H2b) Incentive: group memberships	-0.0185 (0.0172)	-0.0336* (0.0165)	-0.0812*** (0.0144)	-0.006 (0.0165)
(H2c) Incentive: size				1.04E-09*** (5.87E-11)
(H2d) Incentive: membership duration	0.0374*** (0.00234)	0.0385*** (0.00218)	0.0334*** (0.00216)	0.0360*** (0.00213)
Constant	-3.068*** (0.144)	-2.973*** (0.126)	-2.769*** (0.118)	-2.995*** (0.122)
Observations	11,970	13,020	13,020	13,020
Akaike information criterion (AIC)	20,248.0	21,156.5	20,493.8	21,157.0

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; robust standard errors in parentheses.